

SEPTEMBER 23 to 25, 2022

The Crane School of Music
at SUNY Potsdam

2024 COMPETITION FINALS



Domenic J. Pellicciotti Opera Composition Prize

THE CRANE SCHOOL OF MUSIC • SUNY POTSDAM

FINALISTS

- A Nearer Mother* (Evan Mack, composer; Joshua McGuire, librettist)
Computing Venus (Timothy Takach, composer; Caitlin Vincent, librettist)
I Was Shot by a Cop (Anthony R. Green, composer and librettist)
The Strangers (Frank Pesci, composer; Andrew Altenbach, librettist)

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

Friday, September 23 • Wakefield Recital Hall

4 p.m. - Panel Discussion with Composers, Librettists and Dramaturg
Moderated by Carleen Graham and Darren Woods

Saturday, September 24 • Snell Music Theatre

Open Rehearsals with Composer/Librettist Teams,
Crane Opera Ensemble Singers,

1 p.m. - *A Nearer Mother*

2 p.m. - *The Strangers*

3 p.m. - Break

4 p.m. - *I Was Shot by a Cop*

5 p.m. - *Computing Venus*

Sunday, September 25 • Snell Music Theatre

Presentation of finalist scenes by faculty and students of The Crane School of Music, with introductions by the composer and librettist teams as well as moderated audience feedback:

1 p.m. - Finals Presentation A – *I Was Shot by a Cop* and *The Strangers*

5 p.m. - Finals Presentation B – *A Nearer Mother* and *Computing Venus*

7:30 p.m. - Post-Showcase Reception and winners announcement

ABOUT THE PRIZE

The Domenic J. Pellicciotti Opera Composition Prize at The Crane School of Music was founded by Dr. Gary C. Jaquay ('67) to honor his life partner Domenic J. Pellicciotti, an ardent fan of opera. Awarded every four years, the project seeks to encourage and acknowledge the creation of new operatic works that explore themes related to tolerance, inclusion or the celebration of diversity within an inclusive community.

Four project proposals were selected as finalists by a panel of distinguished opera professionals based on a Call for Proposals, and the composer/librettist teams were commissioned to write a fifteen-to-twenty-minute scene for the finals. Faculty and students of The Crane School of Music have prepared these scenes for musical performance this weekend, and from these four finalists, one winner will be awarded a \$25,000 commission to complete the work, which will premiere in November 2024 by the award-winning Crane Opera Ensemble & Orchestra.

I Was Shot by a Cop (Anthony R. Green, composer and librettist)

I Was Shot by a Cop tells the stories of 18 people fatally shot by police officers in the USA. Each story is based on true events which should have sparked drastic policy change but did not. This new opera tells human stories, aiming to enact change through collective empathy.

CAST

Jean/Sop I	Zian Taylor
Soprano II	Sai Barnes
Kelley/Mezzo	Kaswanna Kanyinda
Turner/Tenor	Reykwaan Adorno
Justice/River/Bass	Shavon Lloyd
Eye	Inca Picon



The creative output of **ANTHONY R. GREEN** (composer/performer/ social justice; he/him/his) includes musical and visual creations, interpretations of original, contemporary, and repertoire works, educational outreach, and more. Behind all his artistic endeavors are the ideals of equality and freedom. His operatic works have been presented in Israel, Canada, the US, and digitally by One Ounce Opera, New Fangled Opera, Opera in a Can, Opera Kansas, Annapolis Opera, Chants Libres, Strange

Trace, and featured during the Ft. Worth Opera Frontiers festival. Green's most important social justice work has been with Castle of our Skins: celebrating Black Artistry through Music. www.anthonyrgreen.com

FINALS PRESENTATION A – SNELL MUSIC THEATER

The Strangers (Frank Pesci, composer; Andrew Altenbach, librettist)

In 19th-century New Orleans, a police chief is assassinated. With little evidence, Sicilian immigrants are tried, acquitted, but then lynched by an angry mob directed by the city's elite. Innuendo, politics and xenophobia serve as a backdrop to a parable of immigrants coming face to face with native pride.

CAST

David Hennessy	Daniel Emmons
Iania Roma	Blake Zardezed
Emmanuelle Polizzi	Noah Unser
Billy O'Connor	Nick Hausman

CHORUS

Soprano	Sai Barnes, Haleigh Vescio, Maia Weiss, Claire McCarthy
Mezzo	Julia Steidle, Samantha Yetter, Alyssa Bonfardeci
Tenor	John Calandra, Adam Beiter, Reykwaan Adorno
Baritone	Jimmy Quagliaroli, Brandon Smith, Joseph Carney



ANDREW ALTENBACH (librettist) is a writer of poetry, short stories, and narrative nonfiction. He brings a unique experience to opera libretto writing due to his extensive career as an opera conductor and coach. He is the head of opera at the Boston Conservatory and the music director of the Brookline Symphony Orchestra. He has conducted at Opera Colorado, Tri-cities Opera, Cincinnati Opera, and Santa Fe Opera. He continues to work as an opera coach and chamber musician throughout the Boston area. When he is not spending time with his family, he is a passionate reader of almost everything.



FRANK PESCI is an award-winning composer of “sophisticated music” (The Diapason) that “balances accessible musical lines with...a solid harmonic underpinning.” (ArtsKnoxville)

His catalogue contains over 100 works for the concert stage. Collaborative partners include the Guerzenich Orchestra Cologne, UNLV Opera Theater, Marble City Opera, Fort Worth Opera, Boston Conservatory, Boston Opera Collaborative, Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe, National Book Award winning poet Terrance Hayes, and former Saturday Night Live writer Simon Rich.

He graduated from the University of Cincinnati and the University of Southern Mississippi. He studied with Luigi Zaninelli, John Heiss, and Daron Hagen.

He lives in Cologne, Germany.

FINALS PRESENTATION B – SNELL MUSIC THEATER

A Nearer Mother (Evan Mack, composer; Joshua McGuire, librettist)

Inspired by the life of Ruth Coker Burks, is the story of one woman's quest to help early victims of the AIDS epidemic end their lives in peace. Ruth must negotiate hateful intolerance, an unpredictable virus, and her young child's future to fulfill her calling.

CAST

Ruth Coker Burks	Gabriella Toriseva
Head Nurse	Rebecca Fox
Kathryn	Jayne Matzelle
Patient 1	Ben Johnson
Nurse 1 (s)	Haleigh Vescio
Nurse 2 (m)	Julia Steidle, Claire McCarthy
Nurse 3 (t)	Adam Beiter, John Calandra
Nurse 4 (b)	Jimmy Quagliaroli, Brandon Smith



JOSHUA MCGUIRE is an award-winning opera librettist. Highlights include *The Ghosts of Gatsby* (based on the life of Zelda Fitzgerald), winner of the 2019 National Opera Association's Argento Prize, and a comedy about the fall of the Soviet Union entitled *Yeltsin in Texas!* He is also the author of *The Secret of Music: a look at the listening life* (Shanti Arts, 2019), a book of essays on music and mindfulness. Fellowships include Washington National Opera and Yaddo. His poetry has appeared in *The Dalhousie Review*, *Levee Magazine*, and others. www.joshuamcguire.com.



Believing that opera should be theater grounded in climatic expression that delivers larger-than-life stories and music that harnesses the full athletic thrill of singing, **EVAN MACK** has devoted much of his compositional life to opera and song. He was named 2018 Professional of the Year by Musical America and hailed as "one of the most fitted composers of his generation by industry insiders." Mack is a Senior Teaching Professor at Skidmore College. He lives in Ticonderoga, NY with his wife, Kristin and two sons, Carter and Henry. His albums can be found on Albany and PARMA records.

Computing Venus (Timothy Takach, composer; Caitlin Vincent, librettist)

Computing Venus provides a fascinating glimpse into the life of astronomer Maria Mitchell, one of the earliest champions of women in STEM. The opera follows Mitchell's efforts to cultivate the next generation of women astronomers, even as growing movements threatened to close the world of science to women forever.

CAST

Maria Mitchell	Jessica Felber
Mary	Mekayla Fountaine
Sarah	Faith Tomasula
Ida	Samantha Yetter
Astronomer (solo)	Joseph Carney
Students	Gabby Maresco, Mady DeWater, Lindsay Hebert, Sarah Faragon, Danielle Albrecht, Julia Steidle
Astronomers	Joseph Carney, Jimmy Quagliaroli, Nick Hausman, Adam Beiter, Brandon Smith, John Calandra



CAITLIN VINCENT is an American librettist known for her nuanced character portraits and operatic treatments of historical subjects. Recent operatic works include *Better Gods* (Washington National Opera), *Uncle Alex* (Washington National Opera), *Tienda* (Schubert Club of Minnesota), and *Nullipara* (Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble). In 2017, Vincent and composer Douglas Buchanan won the Sackler Music Composition Prize for *Bessie and Ma*, an opera about the first female African-American aviator and first female governor of Texas. A classically-trained soprano, Vincent graduated from Harvard University and holds an MM degree from the Peabody Conservatory and a PhD from Deakin University in Australia.



Inspired by narrative, magical realism, speculative fiction and making better humans through art, the music of **TIMOTHY C. TAKACH** has become a mainstay in the concert world. Applauded for his melodic lines, text choices and rich, intriguing harmonies, his compositions are performed worldwide. He is a co-founder of Cantus, Graphite Publishing and Nation, and he is a co-creator of the theatrical production *All is Calm: the Christmas Truce of 1914*. Takach has frequent work as a composer-in-residence, presenter, conductor, clinician and lecturer.

2024 SELECTION COMMITTEE MEMBERS



TIMOTHY SULLIVAN

Professor of Music: Theory and Composition at The Crane School of Music (Co-Facilitator of The Pellicciotti Committee)

- PhD: University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
- MM: University of Northern Colorado
- BM: University of Northern Colorado



BROCK TJOSVOLD

Assistant Professor: Vocal Coaching and Accompanying at The Crane School of Music (Co-Facilitator of The Pellicciotti Committee)

- DMA: Eastman School of Music
- Performer's Certificate: Indiana University
- MM: University of Michigan
- BM: University of Wyoming



TOM CIPULLO

Award-winning Classical Composer of Opera and a Founding member of "Friends & Enemies of New Music"

- Recipient of the Domenic J. Pellicciotti Prize Tom Cipullo Photo
- Recipient of Arts & Letters Award from the American Academy
- Recipient of Sylvia Goldstein Award from Copland House
- Recipient of Guggenheim Fellowship



LIESL SHOENBERGER DOTY

Assistant Professor: Violin at The Crane School of Music

- Doctoral Candidate: New England Conservatory
- MM: Indiana University
- BM: Indiana University



ERIN BROOKS

Associate Professor: Music History at The Crane School of Music

- PhD: Washington University
- BA: University of Arkansas

2024 SELECTION COMMITTEE MEMBERS



CORI ELLISON

Dramaturg: The Juilliard School

- Director, Opera Lab, The Juilliard School
- Founding faculty member: American Lyric Theater's Composer Librettist Development Program
- Faculty member at the Ravinia Steans Music Institute Program for Singers
- Served as staff Dramaturg at Santa Fe Opera, the Glyndebourne Festival, and New York City Opera



CARLEEN GRAHAM

Associate Dean & Director of Vocal Division, Manhattan School of Music

- Former Director, HGOco at Houston Grand Opera
- Distinguished Teaching Professor Emerita, SUNY Potsdam
- Former Director of The Crane Opera Ensemble for 24 years



IVETTE HERRYMAN RODRIQUEZ

Assistant Professor: Music Theory and Composition at The Crane School of Music

- DMA: Michigan State University
- MM: Michigan State University
- MM: Baylor University
- BM: Instituto Superior de Artes (Higher Institute of Arts), in Havana



DARREN KEITH WOODS

General Director and Artistic Director of Seagle Music Colony

- General Director of Fort Worth Opera
- General Director of The Shreveport Opera in Louisiana
- Vocal Competition Adjudicator
- Professional Operatic tenor

CRANE OPERA ENSEMBLE

The award-winning Crane Opera Ensemble is a significant source for opera and music theatre in the North Country region of New York State. The ensemble provides exciting opportunities for students to experience all facets of opera performance and production through rehearsals, coachings and classes related to performance practices and production techniques.

Two fully-staged productions are produced each year (one with orchestra and one with a chamber instrumental group or piano). In addition, an Opera Scenes Workshop provides students the opportunity to study a partial role and perform it in an informal venue. The Crane Opera Ensemble is proud of its opera education outreach program. North Country school children experience opera and engage in post-performance workshops with cast members and faculty. To date, over 4,000 children have participated, many experiencing opera for the first time.

Domenic J. Pellicciotti (1949-2010)

Domenic was born into an Italian-American family known for humor, great conversation and loyalty. He grew up in a multi-generational household where the values of sharing, respect and creativity were highly encouraged. Domenic was known for his great personal warmth, conversation and very quick wit. He graduated from St. Joseph's University before enrolling in the U.S. Army. Upon his return to Philadelphia, he worked with the Federal Social Security office for 30 years in various capacities within this organization. Over the years, his diligence and excellent work ethic were recognized by special awards and promotions within this office.

After retiring in 2001, Domenic and his partner Gary Jaquay '67 often entertained friends and family and explored activities that they were unable to do before. Domenic was a voracious reader and they traveled a great deal, often timing a trip so that they would be able to enjoy operas in London, Paris, Vienna, Munich, Milan, Sydney, Moscow, as well as across America. Life in Philadelphia offered such diverse musical opportunities.

Domenic's love of opera extended to discovering emerging singers and they amassed a large library. He also listened to many early opera pioneers: Caruso, Callas, Gigli, Wunderlich, Melba and Melchior, among others. His search for recordings brought in many 78 RPMs and even a few thick, single-sided recordings.

Domenic and Gary's life adventures encouraged the possibility of a special gift to The Crane Opera Ensemble in memory of Domenic and his love of opera. Gary is thrilled to sponsor this among other gifts to The Crane School of Music to honor family members who have inspired his musical growth. He hopes such gifts will keep their names alive for years to come.



Gary '67 (left) and Domenic (right)

